



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT.....

Slips Trips and Falls

PEF OSH Factsheet



Each year thousands of workers suffer injuries from Slips, Trips and Falls (STF) at work. Many people think of fall protection for construction workers and those that work at an elevation, but you may be at risk for serious injury or even death due to falls from the same level. There are things you can do to prevent injuries from falls!

What types of injuries can STFs cause?

According to OSHA, slips, trips and falls constitute the majority of general industry accidents and result in back injuries, strains and sprains, contusions, and fractures. Additionally, they cause 15 percent of all accidental deaths and are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of fatalities

Slips vs. Trips....

Slips happen where there is too little friction or traction between the footwear and the walking surface. Common causes of slips are:

- wet or oily surfaces
- occasional spills
- weather hazards
- loose, unanchored rugs or mats
- flooring or other walking surfaces that do not have same degree of traction in all areas

Trips happen when your foot collides (strikes, hits) an object causing you to lose the balance and, eventually fall. Common causes of tripping are:

- obstructed view
- poor lighting
- clutter in your way
- wrinkled carpeting
- uncovered cables
- bottom drawers not being closed
- uneven (steps, thresholds) walking surfaces



What Can Employers Do?

To prevent SLIPS:

- Ensure spills are reported and cleaned up immediately.
- Provide warning signs for wet floor areas.
- Where there are wet or oily processes, maintain drainage and provide false floors, platforms, nonslip mats or floor surfaces, or other dry standing places
- Use no-skid waxes and surfaces coated with grit to create nonslip surfaces in slippery areas such as toilet and shower areas
- Clean up floors and working surfaces promptly and frequently when they become wet
- Alternate cleaning of passageways (one side at a time)



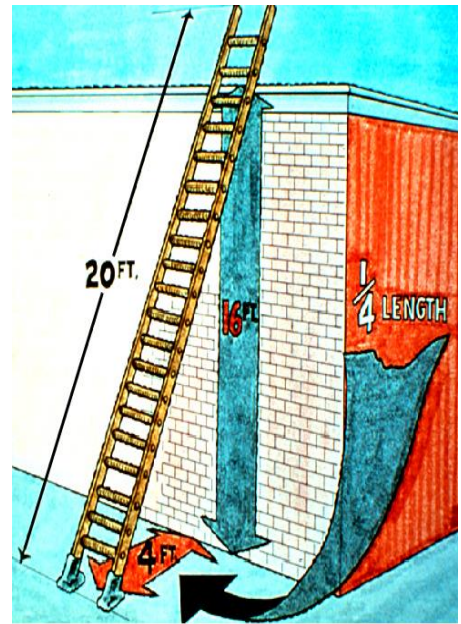
To prevent TRIPS:



- Provide floor plugs for equipment, so power cords need not run across pathways.
 - Temporary electrical cords that cross aisles should be taped or anchored to the floor
 - Re-lay or stretch carpets that bulge or have become bunched to prevent tripping hazards
 - Aisles and passageways should be sufficiently wide for easy movement and kept clear
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- Eliminate cluttered or obstructed work areas and keep file cabinet drawers closed
 - Provide good lighting for all halls and stairwells, especially during night hours
 - Make sure stairs have proper handrails, that treads and risers are maintained, and that treads have a slip-resistant surface
 - Instruct workers to use the handrail on stairs, to avoid undue speed, and to maintain an unobstructed view of the stairs ahead of them, even if that means requesting help to manage a bulky load
 - Eliminate, mitigate or use signage on uneven floor surfaces
 - Make sure that floor drains, pits and other floor opening are covered or protected with guardrails

To prevent FALLS from an elevation:

- Make sure elevated storage and work surfaces have guardrails, toe boards and a permanent means of access
- Use only properly maintained ladders with uniformly spaced rungs and nonslip safety feet to reach items.
- Do not use stools, chairs or boxes as substitutes for ladders
- Train employees in the safe use of ladders, and preventing slips, trips and falls



Footwear as a Preventative Measure

Properly fitting footwear increases comfort and prevents fatigue which, in turn, improves safety for the employee. In workplaces where floors may be oily or wet or where workers spend considerable time outdoors, prevention of fall incidents should focus on selecting proper footwear. There is no footwear with anti-slip properties for every condition, check with the manufacturer for recommendations.

Reporting Procedures:



The employer should develop a system for reporting potential STF hazards.

- Post contact information to report hazards
- Include accident and injury reporting forms
- Use a STF checklist on safety walkthroughs
- **Involve the local Health & Safety Committee**

If the worker cannot address hazard on the spot (e.g. wipe up the spill or move the object), they should:

- Immediately report the hazard to a supervisor, maintenance or landlord
- Alert or warn others in the area
- Mark the area or stay there until help arrives
- Notify the local Health & Safety Committee or Union Steward

What Can Employees Do?

You can reduce the risk of slipping by:

- Report unsafe walking surfaces
- take your time and paying attention to where you are going
- adjust your stride to a pace that is suitable for the walking surface and the tasks you are doing
- walking with the feet pointed slightly outward on ice or slippery surfaces
- making wide turns at corners



You can reduce the risk of tripping by:

- be aware of your surroundings
- keep walking areas clear from clutter or obstructions
- keep flooring in good condition
- use installed light sources that provide sufficient light for your tasks
- use a flashlight if you enter a dark room where there is no light
- make sure things you are carrying or pushing do not prevent you from seeing any obstructions, spills, etc.

Additional Information:

The NYS DOL PESH program offers information and training on preventing slips trips and falls. Contact them for more information at:

<https://labor.ny.gov/workerprotection/safetyhealth/DOSH>

See the PESH/OSHA Standard on STF for more information: [29 CFR 1910.22](#), General Requirements (Walking/Working Surfaces). OSHA Standard.

For Hospital and Healthcare settings see:

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hospital/hazards/slips/slips.html>

NIOSH Slip Trip and Fall Prevention for Healthcare Workers:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2011-123/pdfs/2011-123.pdf>

Funded in part by a NYS Department of Labor Hazard Abatement Board Occupational Health Training and Education Grant

Upon request, the PEF Occupational Health & Safety Department will provide other factsheets, standards, regulations, and other resources. Contact us at healthandsafety@pef.org or 518-785-1900, ext. 254 or 1-800-342-4306, ext. 254.

Produced by the New York State Public Employees Federation

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